

# Machine learning techniques for plant disease detection: an evaluation with a customized dataset

**Amatullah Fatwimah Humairaa Mahomodally, Geerish Suddul, Sandhya Armoogum**

Department of Business Informatics and Software Engineering, School of Innovative Technologies and Engineering, University of Technology, Port Louis, Mauritius

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## ABSTRACT

Diseases in edible and industrial plants remains a major concern, affecting producers and consumers. The problem is further exacerbated as there are different species of plants with a wide variety of diseases that reduce the effectiveness of certain pesticides while increasing our risk of illness. A timely, accurate and automated detection of diseases can be beneficial. Our work focuses on evaluating deep learning (DL) approaches using transfer learning to automatically detect diseases in plants. To enhance the capabilities of our approach, we compiled a novel image dataset containing 87,570 records encompassing 32 different plants and 74 types of diseases. The dataset consists of leaf images from both laboratory setups and cultivation fields, making it more representative. To the best of our knowledge, no such datasets have been used for DL models. Four pre-trained computer vision models, namely VGG-16, VGG-19, ResNet-50, and ResNet-101 were evaluated on our dataset. Our experiments demonstrate that both VGG-16 and VGG-19 models proved more efficient, yielding an accuracy of approximately 86% and a f1-score of 87%, as compared to ResNet-50 and ResNet-101. ResNet-50 attains an accuracy and a f1-score of 46.9% and 45.6%, respectively, while ResNet-101 reaches an accuracy of 40.7% and a f1-score of 26.9%.

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### Corresponding Author:

Amatullah Fatwimah Humairaa Mahomodally

Department of Business Informatics and Software Engineering

School of Innovative Technologies and Engineering, University of Technology

Ave De La Concorde, Port Louis, Mauritius

Email: amahomodally@umail.utm.ac.mu

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Plant diseases affects global food production, biodiversity, our health and the livelihoods of farmers [1]–[7]. The correct usage of pesticides to preserve yields requires a high level of expertise since the indication of a particular disease varies from one plant species to another [2]. Even experienced plant pathologists may fall short in diagnosing diseases correctly, resulting in chemicals such as bactericides, fungicides and nematicides being used excessively, thus adversely affecting biodiversity [8]–[13]. Their use is also harmful to our health, causing both acute and chronic consequences such as neurological and metabolic deficits [2]–[5], [13]. Furthermore, the United Nations estimated that toxic exposure causes an average of 200,000 deaths per year [14]. On the other hand, in developing countries, the livelihoods of smallholder farmers who generate more than 80% of the cultivation are disastrously constrained by yield loss, which is reported to be more than 50% per year due to pests and diseases [15], [16].

Most of the time, diseases in plants are first detected by experienced farmers when they become visible. Though trained raters can detect the ailments with their naked eyes, their analysis may be erroneous

as they can be subjected to fatigue or loss of concentration since the necessary process of continuous plant monitoring is tedious and time-consuming, and harvests may expand over vast areas [17]. Plant disease detection can also be conducted through techniques such as enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA), deoxyribonucleic or acid ribonucleic acid (DNA or RNA) probes, squash blots, tissue blotting and polymerase chain reaction (PCR) by distinguishing DNA or proteins that are different for each disease [18]–[21]. However, though the molecular test kits can detect diseases promptly, their development is expensive and they can be inaccessible to smallholder farmers [18]–[21]. On the other hand, to identify plant diseases quickly, researchers at North Carolina State University developed a sensory device to sample the airborne levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that plants' leaves release [21]. Sensor-based methods have also been adopted to identify plant diseases by detecting early changes in plant physiology such as changes in leaf shape, tissue color and transpiration rate [20], [22], [23]. Nevertheless, accessibility, cost-benefit and training time are some factors that negatively affect the successful implementation of these technologies by smallholder farmers [21]. Furthermore, due to their efficiency in computer vision, various works in recent years have proposed the use of deep learning (DL) algorithms to detect diseases in plants. In the context of plant classification, DL performs classification more accurately than traditional machine learning (ML) methods [24]–[27]. However, further DL research in plant diseases is required in order to produce functional systems that can be utilized in practice [28]. The aim of this paper is to evaluate the state-of-the-art ML models to identify plant diseases and contribute to alleviating drawbacks encompassing plant disease detection, which could be of help to researchers in the field of computer vision for plant disease detection.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Application of ML methods in the agricultural sector to detect plant diseases has shown tremendous success [29]–[32]. According to Zhang *et al.* [33] ResNet performed better than GoogleNet and AlexNet for detecting tomato plant disease. Research by Türkoğlu and Hanbay [34] ResNet-50 with support vector machine (SVM) classifier performed efficiently in terms of f1-score and recall when classifying eight different plant diseases. Research by Ferentinos [35] deployed convolutional neural network (CNN) models such as AlexNet, AlexNetOWTbn, GoogLeNet, OverFeat, and visual geometry group (VGG), by using 87,848 images, VGG reached a relatively higher accuracy of 99.53% when classifying plant diseases.

Research by Jiang *et al.* [36] the VGG-inception architecture outranked ResNet, AlexNet, GoogLeNet and VGG in performance when classifying five types of apple plant diseases. Research by Nachtigall *et al.* [37] AlexNet performs better than multi-layer perceptron (MLP) with an accuracy of 97.3% when classifying diseases in apple plants from a dataset of 1,450 records. Research by Türkoğlu and Hanbay [34] AlexNet outperformed SqueezeNet in terms of accuracy when distinguishing tomato plant disease. Research by Brahimi *et al.* [24] AlexNet and GoogleNet perform better than classification techniques such as SVM and random forest, and AlexNet model reaches a relatively high accuracy of 99.18% for tomato disease detection.

Research by Kawasaki *et al.* [27] a CNN architecture that utilizes the Caffe framework [38] was proposed to detect diseases in the leaves of cucumbers. 800 images of leaves were used as dataset which was then augmented through rotational transformations. The study attained an accuracy of 94.9%. Research by Jia *et al.* [39] image rotations, and perspective transformations were used to enlarge 4,483 original images from the Stanford background dataset [40], after which transfer learning using CaffeNet architecture [38] was implemented to classify 13 types of diseases in plants. According to Rangarajan *et al.* [41] AlexNet has better accuracy compared to VGG-16 when determining six types of diseases in tomato plants [42]. Research by Mohanty *et al.* [6] when using the PlantVillage dataset with 38 classes, transfer learning of GoogleNet achieved an accuracy of 99.35%.

Overall, image recognition is extremely useful due to its ability to handle a large number of input parameters, such as image pixels [29]. It has a fast processing time, and it also lessens human efforts and errors [43]. In due course, computer vision through ML can be effectively used by farmers or even inexperienced users [29].

Nevertheless, various limitations were encountered in several studies. In many cases, the datasets used consist solely of images taken in laboratory-controlled environments and not in real-world setups [28], [35]. An evaluation of trained models utilizing plant images that include real-world environments showed a significant reduction in accuracy by 31% [28]. Another major setback of CNN for identifying specific diseases in plants is that existing public datasets consist of limited records and classes, and as such, cannot identify the vast variety of plants' ailments [29], [44]. Experimental results indicate that the use of datasets with small records prevents neural networks from properly learning the classes [29], [45], [46].

### 3. MATERIALS AND METHOD

This section covers the method used to implement the novel customized dataset and apply DL models for plant disease detection. The experiments were conducted with Jupyter notebook by using Keras with Tensorflow as backend on a simple model laptop without graphics processing unit (GPU). Figure 1 shows a high-level view of the architecture of our proposed solution.

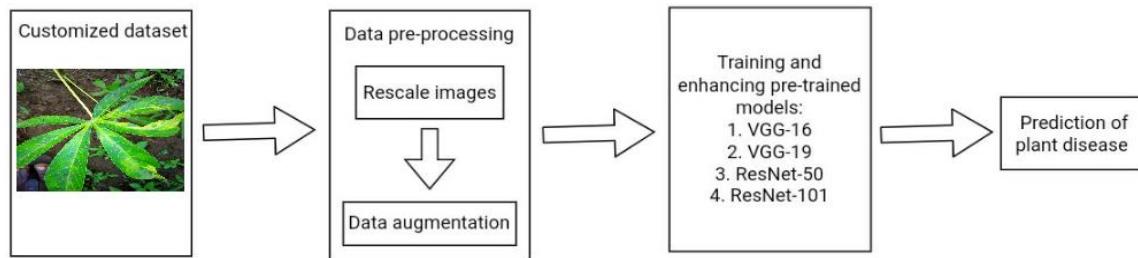


Figure 1. High level architecture of the proposed solution

#### 3.1. Dataset

A customized dataset of 87,570 leaf images, under both lab-controlled and real-world conditions, across 32 crop species segregated into 97 distinct classes of healthy and diseased plants, was compiled for this paper as shown in Figure 2 and Table 1 (see in Appendix) by cleaning and combining multiple open datasets together. Among the 97 categories, 74 and 23 classes belong to diseased and healthy plants, respectively. The main issue with many existing open source datasets is that they consist of images of leaves assessed under lab-controlled setups only and often contain a small number of records and classes that are not appropriate for real-world applications. Our customized dataset consists of a rather large set of records, which can definitely help to overcome the issue of overfitting. Overfitting is a major problem linked to small datasets that consequently produce less reliable models that do not generalize well. Moreover, our customized dataset results in an interesting mix of both lab-controlled and real-world images due to the various open datasets that we used, as depicted in Table 2.

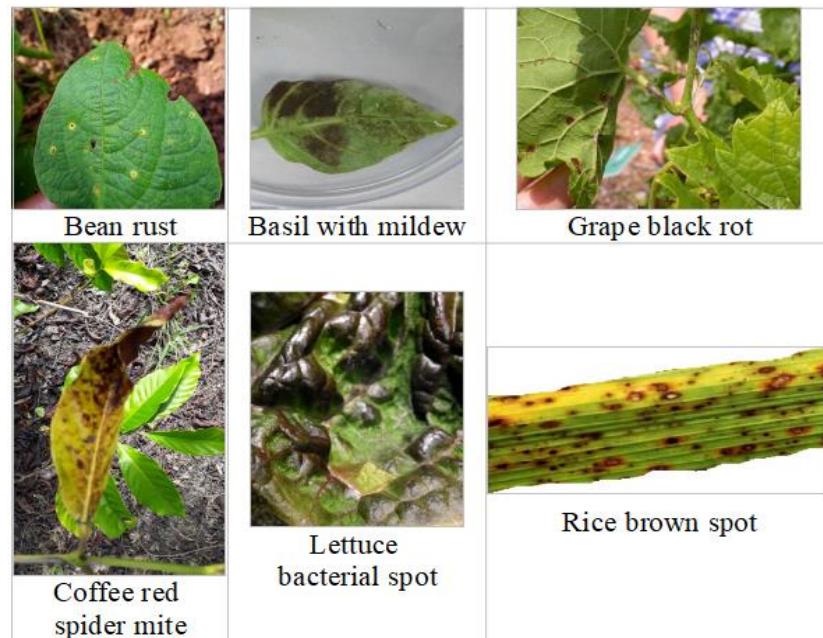


Figure 2. Some leaf images from our customized dataset

Table 2. Description of datasets from which leaf images were adopted

| Dataset name  | Dataset description  | Environment                        | Number of records | Number of classes | URL where dataset is available  |
|---|--|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| PlantVillage [47]   | An expertly curated dataset by PlantVillage which is a non-profit project by Penn State University and EPFL  | Lab-controlled                     | 54,303            | 38                | <a href="https://www.tensorflow.org/datasets/catalog/plant_village">https://www.tensorflow.org/datasets/catalog/plant_village</a>                 |
| PlantDoc  | A dataset of internet scraped images which was accepted at ACM India Joint International Conference on Data Science and Management of Data in 2020             | Both lab-controlled and real-world | 2,598             | 17                | <a href="https://github.com/pratikkayal/PlantDoc-Dataset">https://github.com/pratikkayal/PlantDoc-Dataset</a>                                     |
| Rice leaf diseases  | A dataset which was created under the supervision of farmers by separating infected leaves of rice into different disease classes                              | Lab-controlled                     | 120               | 3                 | <a href="https://archive.ics.uci.edu/ml/datasets/Rice+Leaf+Diseases#">https://archive.ics.uci.edu/ml/datasets/Rice+Leaf+Diseases#</a>             |
| RoCoLe [48]   | A dataset of Robusta coffee leaf images which were visually assessed for classification by an expert   | Real-world                         | 1,560             | 5                 | <a href="https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/c5yvn32dzg/">https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/c5yvn32dzg/</a>                                       |
| Cassava leaf disease classification   | A dataset of cassava images compiled by farmers and experts at the National Crops Resources Research Institute in collaboration with Makerere University       | Real-world                         | 21,367            | 5                 | <a href="https://www.kaggle.com/c/cassava-leaf-disease-classification/data">https://www.kaggle.com/c/cassava-leaf-disease-classification/data</a> |
| Cotton leaf infection   | A dataset for cotton leaf disease classification   | Both lab-controlled and real-world | 1,195             | 4                 | <a href="https://www.kaggle.com/datasets/raaavan/cottonleafinfection">https://www.kaggle.com/datasets/raaavan/cottonleafinfection</a>             |
| Dataset of citrus fruit and leaves [49]   | A dataset of citrus fruits and leaves images acquired under the supervision of a domain expert   | Lab-controlled                     | 759               | 5                 | <a href="https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/3f83gxm57/2">https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/3f83gxm57/2</a>                                       |
| Data for: a low shot learning method for tea leaf's disease identification [50] | A dataset of tea leaf's disease images for the paper entitled 'A low shot learning method for tea leaf's disease identification'                               | Both lab-controlled and real-world | 130               | 3                 | <a href="https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/dbjyfkn6jr/1">https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/dbjyfkn6jr/1</a>                                     |
| Chili plant diseases  | A dataset of chili leaf images   | Real-world                         | 500               | 5                 | <a href="https://www.kaggle.com/dhenydy/chili-plant-diseases">https://www.kaggle.com/dhenydy/chili-plant-diseases</a>                             |
| Wheat leaf dataset [51]   | A dataset of wheat Leaf images collected at Holeta wheat farm in Ethiopia  | Real-world                         | 407               | 3                 | <a href="https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/wgd66f8n6h/">https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/wgd66f8n6h/</a>                                       |
| Banana leaf disease images [52]   | A dataset of banana leaf images collected by farmers and verified by plant pathologists  | Real-world                         | 1,288             | 3                 | <a href="https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/rjykr62kdh/1">https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/rjykr62kdh/1</a>                                     |
| Guava fruits and leaves dataset [53]  | A dataset of guava fruits and leaves collected in Pakistan under the supervision of a domain expert  | Real-world                         | 306               | 4                 | <a href="https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/s8x6jn5cvr/1">https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/s8x6jn5cvr/1</a>                                     |
| PlantaeK [54]   | A dataset of leaf images of grapes, cherry, apple, apricot, pear, cranberry, peach, and walnut collected in Jammu and Kashmir                                  | Lab-controlled                     | 2,157             | 14                | <a href="https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/t6j2h22jpx/1">https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/t6j2h22jpx/1</a>                                     |
| Ibean [55]  | A dataset of beans leaf images compiled by the Makerere AI laboratory in collaboration with the National Crops Resources Research Institute (NaCRRI) in Uganda | Real-world                         | 1,295             | 3                 | <a href="https://www.tensorflow.org/datasets/catalog/beans">https://www.tensorflow.org/datasets/catalog/beans</a>                                 |

### 3.2. Class distribution

In most public datasets for the identification of diseases in plants, we have observed the existence of a class imbalance whereby the number of plant images in some classes is greater than those of other classes. As explained by various researchers, the class imbalance issue in datasets for plant disease detection still prevails because disease lesions in real cultivation fields are less prevalent, and exhausting labor requirements are involved in capturing and annotating leaf images [56], [57]. From Figure 3, it can be observed that common related datasets, including our customized dataset, have different numbers of images in each class. The common datasets represented in Figure 3 not only suffer from the class imbalance issue but also consist of fewer records than our dataset.

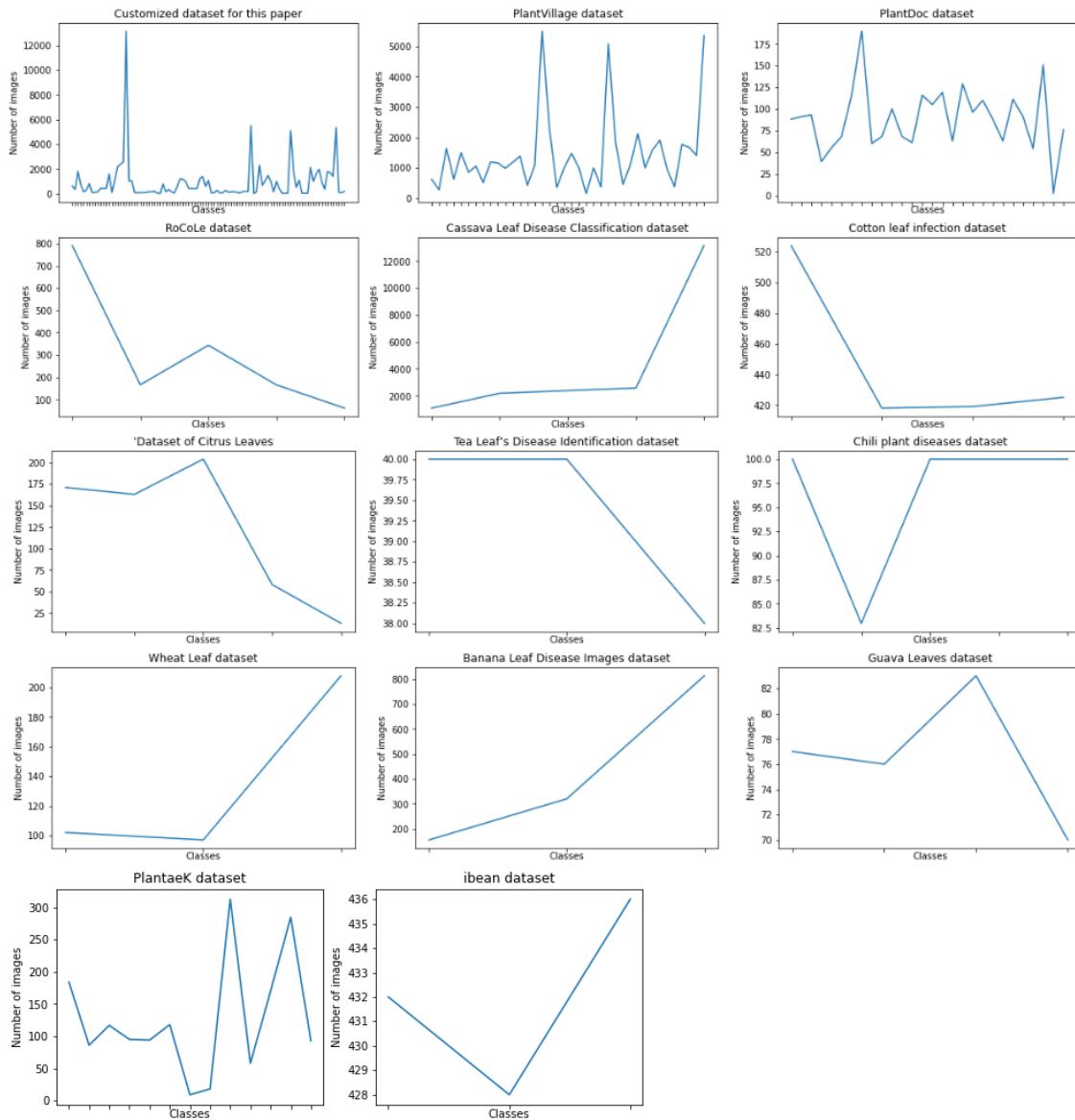


Figure 3. Class imbalance in common plant datasets and the customized dataset

### 3.3. Data processing

Images of the customized dataset were programmatically selected at random, and split into train and test sets in a ratio of 70% to 30% respectively. The train and test sets comprise 61,259 and 26,311 images respectively, and were loaded from their respective directories using the Keras ImageDataGenerator feature. For the purpose of data augmentation which serves to introduce sample diversity and reduce overfitting, the ImageDataGenerator object was initialized with the parameters shown in Table 3. Additionally, "categorical" class mode was used given that the classification is based on more than 2 classes. The train and test batches were of size 64 each. "steps\_per\_epoch" was calculated as the number of train images per batch size while "validation\_steps" was calculated as the number of test images per batch size.

Table 3. Image augmentation parameters

| Parameter          | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Horizontal flip    | True  |
| Vertical flip      | True  |
| Width shift range  | 0.1   |
| Height shift range | 0.1   |
| Zoom range         | 0.2   |
| Rotation range     | 20    |

### 3.4. Transfer learning for classification

In this work, transfer learning utilizing the architectures of four state-of-the-art CNNs models pre-trained on the ImageNet dataset, namely VGG-16, VGG-19, ResNet-50, and ResNet-101 was applied to our customized dataset of leaf images. ImageNet is a large collection of annotated images such as objects, animals and scenes, while transfer learning is the approach that aims to save time and computational resources by reusing features learned from one task in another rather than relearning from scratch. On the other hand, CNN consists of deep, feed-forward artificial neural networks that emulate the way the human vision system works by employing the mechanism of distinguishing one image from another by analyzing input images and then assigning weights to various aspects of each image.

VGG was the runner up of the 2014 ImageNet large scale visual recognition challenge (ILSVRC) while ResNet was the winner of ILSVRC 2015 [58], [59]. The advantage of ResNet over VGG is that it consists of deep networks which do not allow the vanishing gradient problem to occur [59]. Tables 4 and 5 illustrate the VGG and ResNet architectures used in this paper.

Table 4. ResNet-50 and ResNet-101 architectures as per the original paper [59]

| Layer name | Output size | 50-layer                                    | 101-layer                              |
|------------|-------------|---|--|
| conv1      | 112×112     | 7×7, 64, stride 2<br>3×3 max pool, stride 2 |  |
| conv2_x    | 56×56       | [1 × 1,64 3 × 3,64 1 × 1,256 ] × 3          | [1 × 1,64 3 × 3,64 1 × 1,256 ] × 3     |
| conv3_x    | 28×28       | [1 × 1,28 3 × 3,128 1 × 1,512 ] × 4         | [1 × 1,28 3 × 3,128 1 × 1,512 ] × 4    |
| conv4_x    | 14×14       | [1 × 1,256 3 × 3,256 1 × 1,1024 ] × 6       | [1 × 1,256 3 × 3,256 1 × 1,1024 ] × 23 |
| conv5_x    | 7×7         | [1 × 1,512 3 × 3,512 1 × 1,2048 ] × 3       | [1 × 1,512 3 × 3,512 1 × 1,2048 ] × 3  |
|            | 1×1         | average pool, 100-d FC, softmax             |  |
| FLOPs      |             | 7.6×10 <sup>9</sup>                         | 11.3×10 <sup>9</sup>                   |

Table 5. VGG-16 and VGG-19 architectures as derived from the original paper [58]

| ConvNet configuration     |                  |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| 16 weight layers          | 19 weight layers |
| input (224×224 RGB image) |                  |
| conv3-64                  | conv3-64         |
| conv3-64                  | conv3-64         |
| maxpool                   |                  |
| conv3-128                 | conv3-128        |
| conv3-128                 | conv3-128        |
| maxpool                   |                  |
| conv3-256                 | conv3-256        |
| maxpool                   |                  |
| conv3-512                 | conv3-512        |
| maxpool                   |                  |
| conv3-512                 | conv3-512        |
| maxpool                   |                  |
| FC-4096                   |                  |
| FC-4096                   |                  |
| FC-1000                   |                  |
| softmax                   |                  |

The 4 pre-trained models, VGG16, VGG19, ResNet50, and ResNet101 were loaded with ImageNet weights, and the final output layer in each base model was removed since it did not correspond to the number of units that our plant disease classification work required. The training images in RGB format were resized to 100×100 and then fed as input to each pre-trained model. Due to the difference between the tasks of ImageNet and ours, we proceeded with fine-tuning the models. All layers of each base model were frozen, and then the following layers of the specific models were set to trainable, provided that that layer was not a batch normalization one:

- The last 4 layers of the VGG-16 model.
- The last 10 layers of the VGG-19 model.

- The last 11 layers of the ResNet-50 model.
- The last 21 layers of the ResNet-101 model.

Table 6 describes the further operations conducted on each model. During the fine-tuning process, the batch normalization layers were kept frozen to prevent the accuracy of the first epoch from decreasing significantly. Dropout layers were also added to the models to randomly set the activation to zero so as to prevent each network from over-learning certain features. Moreover, Adam optimizer was used to enhance performance and speed when training the models. A low learning rate was additionally set to allow the models to learn optimally by not allowing much changes to occur from what was previously learned. Afterwards, to overcome overfitting/underfitting and find a best-fit model, the EarlyStopping callback was used to monitor the validation accuracy of each model such that the training ends if there is no improvement in the performance measure after 10 epochs.

Table 6. Further operations carried out on each pre-trained model

| Model      | Operations on each model  | Further operations on each model   |
|------------|---|--|
| VGG-16     | - Add a global average pooling 2D layer   | - Define the output layer as a dense layer, with SoftMax activation function, containing 97 neurons        |
| VGG-19     |   |  |
| ResNet-50  | - Create a sequential model   | - Compile the model using Adam optimizer with a learning rate of 0.0001 and categorical cross-entropy loss |
| ResNet-101 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use the pre-trained model as a layer in the sequential model</li> <li>- Add a global average pooling 2D layer</li> <li>- Add a dense layer of 1,024 neurons and ReLU activation</li> <li>- Add a dropout layer of dropout rate of 30%</li> </ul> |  |

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Experimental results

To evaluate and compare the performance of the deep transfer learning models for detecting diseases in plants, we plotted the accuracy/loss versus epoch graph for each model as illustrated in Figure 4, and used overall accuracy, precision, f1-score and recall as evaluation metrics, as shown in Table 7, true positive (TP), true negative (TN), false positive (FP) and false negative (FN) respectively.

$$\text{Overall Accuracy} = \frac{TP + TN}{TP + FP + TN + FN} \quad (1)$$

$$\text{Precision} = \frac{TP + TN}{TP + FP + TN + FN} \quad (2)$$

$$\text{Recall} = \frac{TP + TN}{TP + FP + TN + FN} \quad (3)$$

$$F1 - score = \frac{2}{\frac{1}{\text{Recall}} + \frac{1}{\text{Precision}}} \quad (4)$$

Table 7. Comparing results of models implemented

| Performance metric | VGG-16 | VGG-19 | ResNet-50 | ResNet-101 |
|--------------------|--------|--------|-----------|------------|
| Accuracy           | 0.8590 | 0.8591 | 0.4692    | 0.4068     |
| Precision          | 0.8954 | 0.8966 | 0.5981    | 0.7337     |
| Recall             | 0.8427 | 0.8377 | 0.3703    | 0.1662     |
| F1-score           | 0.8700 | 0.8700 | 0.4564    | 0.2689     |

From Table 7, it can be observed that the VGG-16, VGG-19, ResNet-50, and ResNet-101 models are:

- 85.90%, 85.91%, 46.92%, and 40.68% accurate in making a correct prediction respectively.
- able to predict a specific class correctly 89.54%, 89.66%, 59.81%, and 73.37% of the time respectively.
- able to predict 84.27%, 83.77%, 37.03% and 16.62% of the classes correctly out of all time a specific class should have been predicted respectively.

In terms of accuracy, precision, recall and f1-score, VGG-16 and VGG-19 outperform ResNet-50 and ResNet-101. The accuracy and f1-score of both VGG-16 and VGG-19 are more or less similar, as can be deduced from Table 7. F1-score is computed as the weighted mean of precision and recall. Given the existence of the imbalanced class distribution in our customized dataset, f1-score is an ideal metric to evaluate our models as it takes into account both precision and recall. A vast difference between the f1-score of the VGG and ResNet models can be noted from Table 7. The f1-scores of ResNet-50 and ResNet-101 are less than those of the VGG models by 41.36% and 60.11%, respectively. We therefore conclude that VGG-16 and VGG-19 achieve the best performance compared to ResNet-50 and ResNet-101.

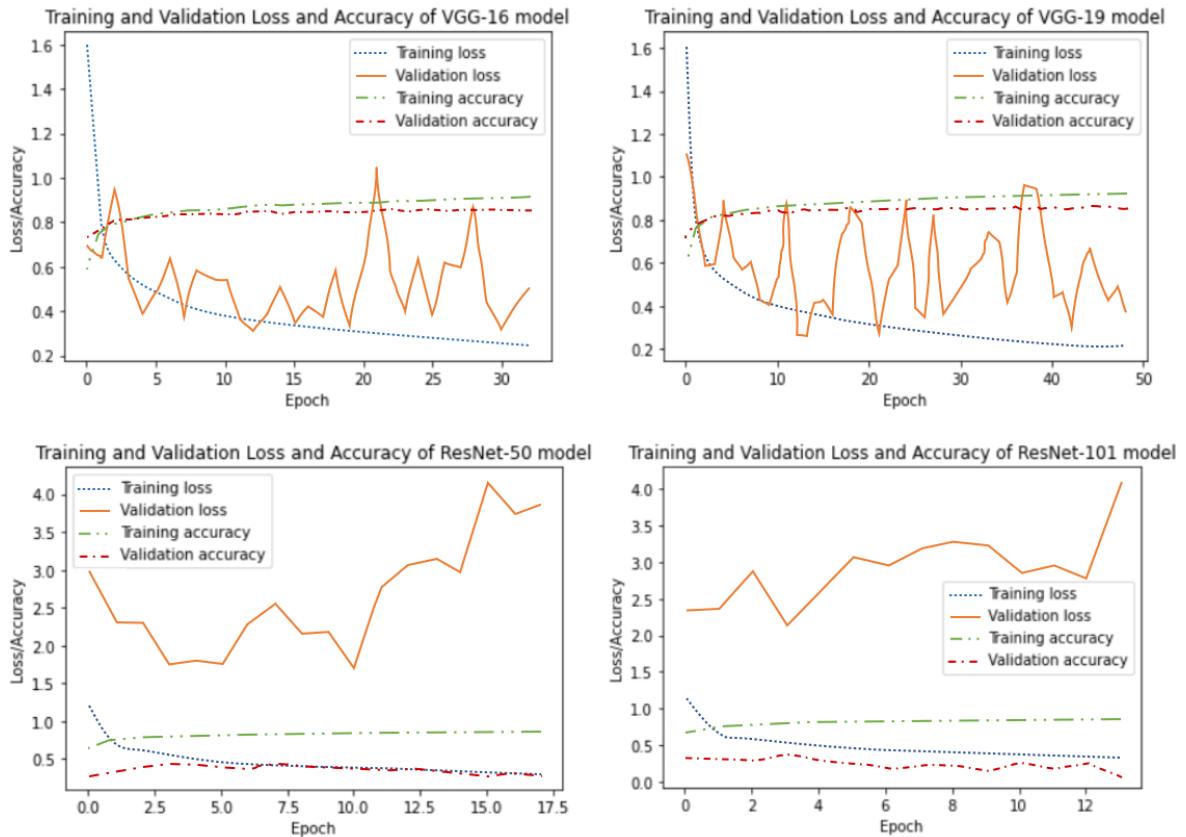


Figure 4. Accuracy/loss versus epoch of each model

#### 4.2. Comparison with existing studies

A comparison of our proposed models with related works is given in Table 8. From the results emanating from Sumalatha *et al.* [60] whereby a subset of the PlantVillage dataset of 11,333 records was used, it can be observed that there is a wide difference between the accuracy of VGG-19 and ResNet-50, which is similar to our case. However, when using the Adam optimizer, as in this paper, that research work obtained a higher accuracy than us for VGG-19 and ResNet-50. Nonetheless, as explained by various researchers [61], those models, as well as other similar state-of-the-art systems with a relatively higher accuracy, are not practical for use in real life because the leaf images studied contain no realistic backgrounds. In another study conducted by Ahmad *et al.* [62] with a dataset of tomato leaf images from real cultivation fields, f1-scores within the range of 77% and 83% were attained for VGG-16 and VGG-19 which is in line with our research. However, that paper utilized fewer records than us, and yielded less accuracy and a lower f1-score for VGG-16 and VGG-19 as compared to our work. Research by Mohameth *et al.* [63] also obtained a higher level of accuracy for VGG-16 than ResNet-50 like us, when classifying diseases in wheat.

Table 8. Comparison between DL studies for plant disease detection

| Paper                        | Dataset            | Dataset size | Number of classes | Environment                        | CNN architecture | Accuracy (%) |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Proposed work                | Customized dataset | 87,570       | 97                | Both lab-controlled and real-world | VGG-16           | 85.90        |
|                              |                    |              |                   |                                    | VGG-19           | 85.91        |
|                              |                    |              |                   |                                    | ResNet-50        | 46.92        |
|                              |                    |              |                   |                                    | ResNet-101       | 40.68        |
| Sumalatha <i>et al.</i> [60] | PlantVillage       | 11,333       | 10                | Lab-controlled                     | VGG-19           | 92.49        |
| Ahmad <i>et al.</i> [62]     | Tomato leaves      | 15,216       | 6                 | Real world                         | ResNet-50        | 60.18        |
| Mohameth <i>et al.</i> [63]  | PlantVillage       | 54,000       | 36                | Lab-controlled                     | VGG-16           | 76.29        |
|                              |                    |              |                   |                                    | VGG-19           | 79.60        |
|                              |                    |              |                   |                                    | VGG-16           | 97.82        |
|                              |                    |              |                   |                                    | ResNet-50        | 95.38        |

### 4.3. Contribution in practice

This work has the potential to make a great contribution towards diagnosing plant diseases in real cultivation fields due to the customized dataset being the widest compilation of plants in both real world and laboratory scenarios. It consists of the largest number of records and the broadest classes of diseased plants to date. We shall publish this dataset, and anticipate that it will be of aid to researchers and people in the agricultural sector.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This research work has been able to show that, through transfer learning and fine-tuning, VGG-16 and VGG-19 outperform ResNet-50 and ResNet-101 on the customized dataset. The dataset consists of 87,570 leaf images categorized into 97 classes and is able to detect 74 diseases in plants. At the time of working on this paper, no single public dataset with leaf images in both real-world settings and laboratory setups contained more records or classes. As such, no DL models have been able to detect a larger number of plant diseases than this work. Classifying diseases in fields consisting of a wide variety of different plant species is important. In addition, due to the unbalanced number of images in the classes of our dataset, we have analyzed the f1-score along with the accuracy of the models. We concluded that VGG-16 and VGG-19 perform better than ResNet-50 and ResNet-101 as they have a higher f1-score and accuracy. The overall accuracy of VGG-19 and VGG-16 is 85.9%, and the f1-score of VGG-19 and VGG-16 is 87.0%.

## 6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE WORK

As future work, the performance of the models implemented can be enhanced by reducing the class imbalance problem so as to ascertain that there is a comparable number of images in each class. Significantly higher classes can be downsampled while data in relatively small classes of the customized dataset can be augmented through ML techniques such as generative adversarial networks (GAN) with label smooth regularization for curbing the resulting loss function. Additionally, the number of epochs, layers, image size, learning rate and optimizer can be varied.

Furthermore, existing datasets for disease classification in plants still have a limited number of records since collecting and annotating leaf images is difficult. As more data spanning wider varieties of plants and their diseases becomes available over time, more robust and efficient DL models can be developed to better classify diseases in plants. Further analysis will also be required in order to determine whether the models developed can cater for disease detection in individual plant species.

## APPENDIX

Table 1. Number of images in each class

| Plant     | Class                        | Number of images |
|-----------|------------------------------|------------------|
| Apple     | Apple black rot              | 621              |
|           | Apple cedar apple rust       | 362              |
|           | Apple healthy                | 1,814            |
|           | Apple scab                   | 723              |
| Banana    | Banana healthy               | 155              |
|           | Banana sigatoka              | 320              |
|           | Banana xanthomonas           | 814              |
| Basil     | Basil wilted                 | 89               |
|           | Basil with mildew            | 109              |
|           | Healthy basil                | 165              |
| Bean      | Bean angular leaf spot       | 432              |
|           | Bean healthy                 | 428              |
|           | Bean rust                    | 436              |
| Blueberry | Blueberry healthy            | 1,608            |
| Brassica  | Brassica black rot           | 107              |
| Cassava   | Cassava bacterial blight     | 1,087            |
|           | Cassava brown streak disease | 2,189            |
|           | Cassava green mottle         | 2,386            |
|           | Cassava healthy              | 2,577            |
|           | Cassava mosaic disease       | 13,158           |
| Cherry    | Cherry healthy               | 1,024            |
|           | Cherry powdery mildew        | 1,052            |
| Chili     | Chili healthy                | 100              |
|           | Chili leaf curl              | 83               |
|           | Chili leaf spot              | 100              |
|           | Chili whitefly               | 100              |

Table 1. Number of images in each class (continue)

| Plant      | Class                                       | Number of images |
|------------|---|------------------|
| Chili      | Chili yellowish                             | 100              |
|            | Citrus black spot                           | 171              |
| Citrus     | Citrus canker                               | 163              |
|            | Citrus greening                             | 204              |
|            | Citrus healthy                              | 58               |
|            | Citrus melanose                             | 13               |
| Coffee     | Coffee healthy                              | 794              |
|            | Coffee red spider mite                      | 167              |
|            | Coffee rust level 1                         | 344              |
|            | Coffee rust level 2                         | 166              |
|            | Coffee rust level 3                         | 62               |
|            | Corn cercospora leaf spot                   | 579              |
| Corn       | Corn common rust                            | 1,202            |
|            | Corn healthy                                | 1,162            |
|            | Corn northern leaf blight                   | 997              |
|            | Cotton bacterial blight                     | 448              |
| Cotton     | Cotton curl virus                           | 418              |
|            | Cotton fusarium wilt                        | 419              |
|            | Cotton healthy                              | 425              |
|            | Grape black rot                             | 1,240            |
| Grape      | Grape esca black measles                    | 1,383            |
|            | Grape healthy                               | 596              |
|            | Grape leaf blight isariopsis leaf spot      | 1,076            |
|            | Guava canker                                | 77               |
| Guava      | Guava dot                                   | 76               |
|            | Guava healthy                               | 277              |
|            | Guava mummification                         | 83               |
|            | Guava rust                                  | 70               |
| Coriander  | Healthy coriander                           | 272              |
| Kale       | Kale with spots                             | 137              |
| Lettuce    | Lettuce anthracnose                         | 154              |
|            | Lettuce bacterial spot                      | 173              |
|            | Lettuce downy mildew                        | 123              |
|            | Lettuce soft rot                            | 57               |
| Mint       | Mint fusarium wilt                          | 175              |
|            | Mint leaf rust                              | 193              |
|            | Powdery mildew mint leaf                    | 199              |
|            | Orange huanglongbing citrus greening        | 5,507            |
| Orange     | Parsley leaf blight disease                 | 19               |
| Parsley    | Parsley leaf spot disease                   | 169              |
| Peach      | Peach bacterial spot                        | 2,297            |
|            | Peach healthy                               | 675              |
| Pepper     | Pepper bell bacterial spot                  | 1,047            |
|            | Pepper bell healthy                         | 1,482            |
| Potato     | Potato early blight                         | 1,000            |
|            | Potato healthy                              | 152              |
|            | Potato late blight                          | 1,000            |
| Raspberry  | Raspberry healthy                           | 413              |
| Rice       | Rice bacterial leaf blight                  | 40               |
|            | Rice brown spot                             | 40               |
|            | Rice leaf smut                              | 40               |
| Soybean    | Soybean healthy                             | 5,100            |
| Squash     | Squash powdery mildew                       | 1,855            |
| Strawberry | Strawberry healthy                          | 517              |
|            | Strawberry leaf scorch                      | 1,109            |
| Tea        | Tea leaf blight                             | 40               |
|            | Tea red scab                                | 38               |
| Tomato     | Tomato bacterial spot                       | 2,127            |
|            | Tomato early blight                         | 1,006            |
|            | Tomato healthy                              | 1,599            |
|            | Tomato late blight                          | 1,982            |
|            | Tomato leaf mold                            | 963              |
|            | Tomato mosaic virus                         | 379              |
|            | Tomato septoria leaf spot                   | 1,801            |
|            | Tomato spider mites two spotted spider mite | 1,676            |
|            | Tomato target spot                          | 1,404            |
| Wheat      | Tomato yellow leaf curl virus               | 5,359            |
|            | Wheat healthy                               | 102              |
|            | Wheat septoria                              | 97               |
|            | Wheat stripe rust                           | 208              |

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**BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS**

**Amatullah Fatwimah Humairaa Mahomodally** has a degree in software engineering from the University of Technology, Mauritius. She currently works as an application automation engineer at Accenture, and is passionate about doing research in machine learning. She can be contacted at amahomodally@umail.utm.ac.mu.



**Geerish Suddul** received his Ph.D. from the University of Technology, Mauritius (UTM). He is currently a Senior Lecturer at the UTM, in the Department of Business Informatics and Software Engineering under the School of Innovative Technologies and Engineering. He has been actively involved in research and teaching since 2005, and currently his research work focuses on different aspects of machine learning such as computer vision and natural language processing. He can be contacted at g.suddul@utm.ac.mu.



**Sandhya Armoogum** received her Ph.D. from the University of Technology, Mauritius (UTM). She is currently an Associate Professor at the UTM, in the Department of Industrial Systems Engineering under the School of Innovative Technologies and Engineering. She has been actively involved in research and teaching since 2003, and currently her research work focuses on using machine learning in areas such as cyber security, computer vision, agriculture, and data analytics. She can be contacted at sandhya.armoogum@utm.ac.mu.